

Claims

We claim:

1. A container, comprising:
  - 2 a first container portion;
  - 4 a second container portion joined to the first container portion to define a sealed cavity therebetween;
  - 6 a coolant disposed within the cavity; and
  - pressure relief apparatus operable to limit pressure in the sealed cavity.
2. The container of claim 1, wherein the pressure relief apparatus comprises a thinned wall portion.
3. The container of claim 1, wherein the pressure relief apparatus comprises a valve.
4. The container of claim 1, wherein the pressure relief apparatus comprises an opening in one of the container portions.
5. The container of claim 4, wherein a plug is disposed in the opening.
6. The container of claim 1, wherein the pressure relief apparatus comprises a joined section that joins the first and second container portions and wherein the joined section ruptures in response to an elevated pressure in the sealed cavity to limit pressure in the cavity.
7. The container of claim 6, wherein the joined section includes a first connection region that ruptures at a first pressure and a second connection region that is rupturable at a second pressure greater than the first pressure.

8. The container of claim 1, wherein the pressure relief apparatus  
2 comprises a joined section that joins the first and second container portions and  
wherein the joined section ruptures in response to an elevated temperature in the  
4 sealed cavity to limit pressure in the cavity.
9. The container of claim 8, wherein the elevated temperature comprises  
2 a first elevated temperature and wherein the joined section includes a first connection  
region that ruptures at the first elevated temperature and the joined section further  
4 includes a second connection region that is rupturable at a second elevated  
temperature greater than the first elevated temperature.
10. The container of claim 1, wherein the coolant comprises a cross-linked  
2 gel.
11. The container of claim 10, wherein the gel includes sodium  
2 carboxymethylcellulose.
12. The container of claim 10, wherein the gel includes a preservative.
13. The container of claim 1, wherein the container is exposed to room  
2 temperature and wherein the container is capable of maintaining items placed therein  
within a range of temperatures below room temperature for a period of time.
14. The container of claim 13, wherein the range of temperatures is about  
2 10°C to about 15.5°C and wherein the period of time is about 4 to about 6 hours.

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15. A container, comprising:  
2 a first container portion;  
a second container portion joined to the first container portion to define a  
4 sealed cavity therebetween;  
a coolant disposed within the cavity; and  
6 a joined section that joins the first and second container portions wherein the  
joined section is operable to limit pressure within the cavity.

16. The container of claim 15, wherein the joined section includes a first  
2 connection region that ruptures at a first elevated pressure to limit pressure within the  
cavity and a second connection region that is rupturable at a second elevated pressure  
4 greater than the first pressure.

17. The container of claim 15, wherein the joined section ruptures in  
2 response to an elevated temperature.

18. The container of claim 17, wherein rupture results from mechanical  
2 stress caused by the elevated temperature.

19. The container of claim 18, wherein the mechanical stress includes  
2 cracking of the joined section.

20. The container of claim 17, wherein rupture results from melting of the  
2 joined section caused by the elevated temperature.

21. The container of claim 15, wherein the joined section surrounds an  
2 opening that is exposed to the cavity upon rupture of the joined section.

22. The container of claim 15, wherein the coolant comprises a cross-  
2 linked gel.

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23. The container of claim 22, wherein the gel includes sodium  
2 carboxymethylcellulose.

24. The container of claim 22, wherein the gel includes a preservative.  
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25. The container of claim 15, wherein the container is exposed to room  
2 temperature and wherein the container is capable of maintaining items placed therein  
within a range of temperatures below room temperature for a period of time.

26. The container of claim 25, wherein the range of temperatures is about  
2 10°C to about 15.5°C and wherein the period of time is about 4 to about 6 hours.

27. The container of claim 15, wherein the first container portion further  
2 comprises a first wall having a base portion and a first rim and wherein the second  
container portion comprises a second wall having second rim and wherein the second  
4 rim is joined to the first rim.

28. The container of claim 27, wherein the coolant comprises a cross-  
2 linked gel.

29. The container of claim 28, wherein the second wall further comprises a  
2 first raised portion joined to the base portion that is rupturable in response to a first  
elevated pressure and a second raised portion joined to the base portion that is  
4 rupturable at a second elevated pressure greater than the first elevated pressure.

30. A container, comprising:  
2 a first container portion having a first wall, a base portion and a first rim;  
a second container portion having a second wall and a second rim wherein the  
4 second rim is joined to the first rim, thereby defining a cavity between the container  
portions;  
6 a cross-linked gel disposed within the cavity;  
a first raised portion integral with the second wall wherein the first raised  
8 portion joins the second wall to the base portion and is rupturable in response to a first  
elevated pressure; and  
10 a second raised portion integral with the second wall wherein the second  
raised portion joins the second wall to the base portion and is rupturable at a second  
12 elevated pressure greater than the first elevated pressure.

31. The container of claim 32, wherein the gel includes sodium  
2 carboxymethylcellulose.

32. The container of claim 32, wherein the gel includes a preservative.  
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33. The container of claim 32, wherein the container is exposed to room  
2 temperature and wherein the container is capable of maintaining items placed therein  
within a range of temperatures below room temperature for a period of time.

34. The container of claim 36, wherein the range of temperatures is about  
2 10°C to about 15.5°C and wherein the period of time is about 4 to about 6 hours.